



**Remarks by  
Ambassador Marcia Bernicat at  
Usaid-Ukaid National Launch of *Shantite Bijoy* Peaceful Election  
Campaign**

**Bangabandhu International Conference Center (BICC)  
Agargaon, Dhaka  
Monday, September 17, 2018**

Honorable guests; respected leaders from the Awami League, Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Jatiya Party; colleagues from the development partner and diplomatic community; members of media; ladies and gentlemen – Assalam-u-Alaikum, Shubho Shokal!

On behalf of the United States Government, I'm delighted to be here today, two days after commemorating the International Day of Democracy (e.g., September 15), an important day to many of us.

Thank you for joining this *Shantite Bijoy* or *Win with Peace* campaign launch event. It is inspiring to see so many of you – prominent leaders – representing different political parties. Your presence demonstrates your commitment to promoting peace, tolerance and democracy in Bangladesh.

Today's event is the result of great partnership between the U.S. Government, British Government – and all of YOU – our Bangladeshi partners. It is the will, the ambition for growth and progress that unites all of us. Enshrined in our constitutions is the notion that all people are created equal and, when given the opportunity and freedom to think, invent, and express themselves, the potential is limitless. I hope today's event will motivate us all to an even greater commitment to keeping Bangladesh peaceful, and ensuring that all citizens enjoy the right to freely express their views and also to participate peacefully in the coming parliamentary elections.

Peace, mutual tolerance and inclusivity – all have a strong tradition in Bangladesh.

Together, we can contribute to a peaceful and prosperous Bangladesh, through our collaborative work with the government, political parties, civil society, academia, media – and most importantly – the people of Bangladesh.



Free, fair and inclusive elections are important for a democracy – especially, for one, which is on track to become a Middle Income Country.

All parties, groups and individuals should be free to participate fully in the political process leading up to the vote. Individuals from different political parties must be free to express their political views, to campaign throughout the country and to hold peaceful rallies and meetings without intimidation, reprisal or arbitrary restrictions.

Political parties must accept their rivals as legitimate participants in the political process and as potential leaders of the next government, even when they disagree on issues or policies.

It is essential that Bangladeshis urge nonviolence by all actors at every stage of the democratic process, before, during, and after the election. Violence serves only those who wish to undermine the democratic processes and interest of Bangladesh and its citizens.

I wish everyone present here today – every individual representing different political parties – success and commitment to continue promoting *Shantite Bijoy* campaign during the election period. I look forward to our continued partnership as we work together to help you build a bright future for Bangladesh.

Thank you to the Strengthening Political Landscape team, led by Democracy International, for so successfully putting together this very important event. And, I thank you all for joining in and supporting the *Shantite Bijoy* campaign.

Onek dhonnobad! *Shantite Bijoy, Win with Peace!*

*\*As prepared for delivery*

**GR/2018**